



 LifeGroups
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David Among the Philistines

Background

- David is in Engedi and spares Saul's life.
- Engedi means “spring of the kid goat” and is on the west coast of the Dead Sea. It is at the edge of the Judean desert and a large natural oasis.
- David cut off part of Saul's robe. It would have had distinctive fringe, designs and stitching marking him as the king, so there would have been no denying it when David showed it to him.
- He presented it to Saul. Saul admitted to David that David was more righteous than he was. But David did not go back to the palace.

Engedi Landscape



Godly Person Gains Favor

- A godly person gains the favor of his or her enemies.
- 1 Samuel 27:1–6
- David knew that no matter what he said, Saul would never stop chasing him (27:1), so he chose to flee to the Philistines.
- It's sad that he felt safer going to the land of his enemies than staying in his own homeland, especially since he should have been the rightful king.
- But that was how desperate he thought his situation was.

Godly Person Gains Favor

- This is the first time in the story we have heard David's internal thoughts, the thoughts of his heart (27:1).
- This was a huge shift for David, and the story makes it abundantly clear that David went to the land of the Philistines only because he realized he would never be safe in Saul's kingdom.
- David chose to go to Gath, where he had briefly fled earlier in the story, after he had eaten the showbread from the tabernacle and been given Goliath's sword (21:10).

Gath



Godly Person Gains Favor

- At that time, he was afraid of Achish, the king of Gath, and pretended to be a madman before him so that Achish told his servants to send David away.
- At this point, the king's name is still Achish, but it is unclear whether it's the same king or his son or even if "Achish" is simply a title.
- Even if it were the same person, it's believable that he wouldn't have remembered David nor have realized it was the same person.
- This time, David came with his 600 men and their families with a formal request for asylum. It is unlikely that anyone would have recognized him.

Godly Person Gains Favor

- When David arrived at Gath, he lived “with Achish” with all 600 men and their families (27:3). It’s referring to living in the royal city (27:5).
- The opening few verses don’t describe David officially asking for asylum, but that is what would have had to happen with that many people.
- In that culture, David would have had to come before the king and make a covenant or treaty. Achish would provide David a place to live and protection from David’s enemies, and in return David would give him a percentage of his crops, flocks, or spoils from war.

Godly Person Gains Favor

- God's law forbids making an alliance with the foreign nations who occupied the promised land, and Achish was the king of one of those nations (Exodus 23:20–33; 34:10–16). But David wasn't the Israelite king yet; he was on the run in a foreign land and needed protection.
- Before the Mosaic law was instituted, the patriarchs made alliances with foreigners when they needed to: Abraham with the Canaanites (Genesis 14:13) and Abimelech (21:22–34), Isaac with Abimelech (26:26–33), Jacob with Laban (31:44–54).

Godly Person Gains Favor

- David wasn't joining Gath; he was seeking asylum in a foreign nation, which he had to do because the Israelite king wasn't following God. But David asked for their own land outside the royal city (27:5).
- Someone was typically given a plot of land to work so he could give a portion of his flocks or crops back to the suzerain. David and his men weren't currently in the business of farming or shepherding; they were an army.
- Since they weren't farming or raising animals, it was somewhat unusual for David to ask Achish for land as well. Yet Achish gave him an entire town.

Godly Person Gains Favor

- The exact location of Ziklag is unknown, but it is in the Negev, which is geographically pretty far from Gath.
- This allowed David and his people to remain separate from the Philistines even while serving Gath.
- Ziklag was also part of the inheritance God promised to the tribe of Judah, so this was David receiving what God intended to be his anyway (Joshua 15:31), a foreshadowing of how David would finally take the land God had intended them to have from the beginning of the Exodus.

Godly Person Gains Favor

- David was given safety, land, and other resources for his people because he had “gained favor” with Achish.
- In the New Testament, Paul told the Church that church leaders must have good reputations with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7, 13), not to use them for our gain but so our good works would glorify our Father (Matthew 5:16).
- Like David, we want to make sure we’re not letting those outside the Church pull us away from God, but we need to have healthy, positive relationships with unbelievers in order to lead them to Jesus.

Godly Person Gains Favor

- Acts describes the first church in Jerusalem with the exact same phrase – they had “favor with all the people” and the Lord added to their number daily (Acts 2:47).
- God can grow His Church with or without us, but a good reputation outside the Church as being people of character, integrity and love will shine a light that makes them more interested in joining us.

Godly Person Remains Loyal

- Godly people can live in the world but remain loyal to God's kingdom.
- 1 Samuel 27:7–11
- While David was in alliance with Achish, he went out to battle and brought the spoils back as his payment.
- David attacked the non-Israelite people who were still living in the Promised Land. The Geshurites, Girzites and Amalekites were all enemies the Israelites were supposed to have driven out of the Promised Land but didn't. So were the Philistines, including Gath.

Godly Person Remains Loyal

- The fact that Achish was there at all was because Israel had never conquered the whole Promised Land as they were supposed to.
- Joshua 1–12 describes the battles of the conquest, but Joshua 13 lists all the cities that had yet to be conquered when Joshua died (Joshua 13:1–7).
- Joshua's last words to the people were that they would have to continue to fight, and if they were faithful, God would drive these enemies out of the land (Joshua 23:1–13).

Godly Person Remains Loyal

- But Judges 2 tells us that Israel was unfaithful to God and worshipped the gods of the people around them, which is what He told them would happen if they remained in the land.
- When a godly judge was in leadership, the people would follow God, but when that judge died, they went back to idolatry.
- God said He would no longer drive out the nations from the land (Judges 2).
- There were Philistines and other people groups in the land in the time of David.

Godly Person Remains Loyal

- David actually fought the enemies of Israel, fulfilling what God had originally told Israel to do during the conquest (27:8).
- But David told Achish that he was fighting against the people of Israel (Judah) and their allies (Jerahmeelites and Kenites) (27:10).
- Israel wasn't supposed to make allies of foreign nations in the Promised Land; Saul was breaking this law.
- David left no one alive in those cities so Achish could not learn that David was deceiving him (27:11).

Godly Person Remains Loyal

- Achish thought David was making himself an enemy of Israel and so would never be able to return (27:12). In reality, David was conquering more of the Promised Land for Israel and driving these pagan nations out of the land.
- Although lying and deception are wrong, God used David's sinful actions to accomplish some of the cleansing of the land that He had intended the first few generations of Israel to do.
- David's deception also allowed him to serve Achish while remaining loyal to God, his true king.

Godly Person Trusts the Lord

- Godly people put their trust in the Lord and wait on Him.
- 1 Samuel 28:1–2 and Psalm 31
- This is where David's actions placed him between a rock and a hard place. Achish trusted him and thought David was on his side. He believed that David had been attacking his own people on behalf of Achish.
- When all the Philistines cities decided to gather their armies together to war against Israel, Achish told David that he will go into battle with Achish, assuming David would have no problem with it.

Godly Person Trusts the Lord

- David responded with an ambivalent, “Thus you shall see what your servant can do” (28:2).
- Achish took his response positively and said that he would make David his chief guardian forever.
- Will he fight against Israel, or will he deceive Achish again?
- What was he really saying when he said to Achish, “You will see” – you’ll see me turn on you in battle and destroy the Philistines, or you will see what God will do to rescue me?

Godly Person Trusts the Lord

- Samuel had prophesied that David would be king of Israel, not the chief of the guard for a Philistine king.
- How would he get out of this situation?
- Would he have to fight against his own nation to keep his cover with Achish or would he turn on Achish?
- Did David even have a plan or did his ambivalent answer show that he didn't know what he would do, but would trust God to provide a way out?

Godly Person Trusts the Lord

- We don't know when Psalm 31 was written, but the heart of it is what he may have been feeling.
- “In you, O Lord, do I take refuge ... rescue me speedily!” (verses 1–2).
- He had terror on every side (verse 13), from his own king and other enemies.
- Seemingly, his only ally was a Philistine king he wasn't sure he could trust.
- “But I trust in you, O Lord ... my times are in your hand, rescue me from the hands of my enemies!” (verses 14–15).

Godly Person Trusts the Lord

- When we are in difficult situations, whether by circumstance or the result of our own sin, and we don't know what to do, all we can do is trust in Him.
- Later, we will see God rescue David from having to fight against Israel while being able to keep his favor with Achish (1 Samuel 29:1–11).
- God did provide a way out for David as He promises to do for us every time we are tempted to sin (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- We may not know exactly what God is doing or how or when He will rescue us. We just have to put our trust in Him and wait to see what He will do.

Application

- David saw no way out, so he put his plan into action not God's plan.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13 - promises that God will provide a way out.
- David was able to find favor with Achish.
 - Like the disciples, we should find “favor with all the people” (Acts 2:47).
- David remained loyal to Israel even when living with the Philistines.
 - We should not be conformed to this world (Romans 12:1-2)